

**Town of Essex
Architectural Design Review Subcommittee**

Tuesday, May 10, 2011

7:30 PM

Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room B

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Chair Neil Nichols called the meeting to order at 7:36. Present were Tom Danyliw, Cotty Barlow, Tom Rutherford, Janice Atkeson, and Jane Piro. Absent were John Beveridge, Hope Proctor, and Bill Jacaruso. It was noted that agendas need to be mailed to the subcommittee preferably one week in advance.

2. National Historic Property Survey public announcement.

This was mentioned briefly at the last meeting. The paperwork for this had gone astray for inclusion in the National Historic Register. This is separate and distinct from the CT Historic District. Houses in this survey are automatically in it. It is an honorary register, and not a district. Tom Danyliw asked if it allow us to protect heritage. It has no teeth at all but is just recognition by the state. Paperwork was filed, but then put aside and never pursued. This is a resurrection of that document. Essex is in the CT Historic District for the village, the nomination and designation are honorific and voluntary. There are several advantages such as enabling of asbestos abatement and ADA compliance. If we have flood as a result of hurricane, property must be rebuilt, but EPA requirements are waived for this district. The house numbers are the old numbers. The Town Clerk's office has a translation for the new correct numbers.

Neil Nichols feels it's a win-win and dovetails with what the River Museum is doing with the battle site. This is the most "flexible" because there is nothing to it. With businesses talking about ADA compliance, did they HAVE to do it if they are in the district? This is about protecting heritage but will people understand this? This is informational only, as the work still needs to be done. Jane Piro suggested that the Historic Society might want to do something with this. It identifies an area that needs to be protected. Phil Esser has identified areas in Centerbrook and Ivoryton that need to be protected. The Planning Commission is interested in the whole town. This doesn't solve anything in preserving Architectural heritage.

3. Focus group plan update

Janice Atkeson reported that the next step is to find a moderator with impartiality. She spoke to John Guskowski to contact folks at CRERPA and together they will identify 2 or 3 people. Centerbrook Architects and Milone and MacBroom are also possible sources. Neil Nichols should interview them along with Janice Atkeson, Jane

Piro and Tom Rutherford. Cotty Barlow is an alternate. These groups need to happen between June 6 and 10, possibly 2 per night.

The plan is to choose moderators, send out letters, the week of Memorial Day and hold focus groups the next week. At the focus groups, participants will be asked for a show of hands, which way are people leading. A scribe at the groups will glean information and record. Confidentiality agreements need to be signed. That is done in the corporate setting. Questions were raised about that. It also needs to be determined if it should be noticed. Fran Nolin and Maria Lucarelli and possibly the Hartford office of FOI will be contacted.

The letter will be posted on the town website.

4. Final plan for media letter re: the focus group phase of the ADR study

The Sub committee will review comments from the focus groups.

5. Minutes of April 5, 2011 meeting

Motion by Janice Atkeson to table the minutes of the April meeting until June.

Seconded by Jane Piro. **Motion carried.**

Jane Piro brought up discussion of “the big picture”. The timeline is set, and everything should be ready for a September public meeting. The focus groups are a validation of what we’ve done so far. Their purpose is getting the pulse; these will make the committee better able to meet with the public. The focus groups should narrow the options to tell people that “this is what we heard”, at the mega meeting in September. All options should be laid out at the public meeting even if focus groups have narrowed it down. Jane Piro asked where the end game is. Tom Danyliw stated that the Planning Commission would make the ultimate decision but wants it vetted. The public meeting may end up with several options. ADR should make recommendations to the Planning Commission. Tom Danyliw said the Architectural Design Subcommittee could come up with one or several recommendations. Jane Piro asked when it would be wrapped up. Realistically, it will be October or November.

Janice Atkeson asked that Phil Esser’s books be put in several public places. The Historical Society can get comments together. No commercial buildings are covered, but were not part of the survey. It should be a “disclaimer” that commercial and street fronts were not covered. Survey – The Planning Commission is waiting for the final Survey with edits. Jane Pire will push John Guskowski to finalize it as it needs minor edits. As soon as the Survey is finished, it will get out to the public.

Motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. by Jane Piro. **Seconded** by Janice Atkeson. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Meinsen
Recording Secretary